



Empowering people with impaired mobility to reach their full potential

## PRESS RELEASE

3 December 2015

BRUSSELS – Uniting for the first time under the [#ISPOWER](#) banner, on the [International Day for Persons with Disabilities](#), member organizations of the #ISPOWER Steering Committee aim to raise decision makers' awareness on the importance of Prosthetic and Orthotic (P&O) and Assistive Health Technology services to empower people with impaired mobility.

[ISPO International](#) (the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics) together with its partners – the [African Federation of Orthopaedic Technicians](#), [Handicap International Federation](#), [Interbor](#), the [International Confederation of Amputee Associations](#), the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#), the [International Society of Wheelchair Professionals](#) and [Motivation](#) – call for increased access to prosthetics, orthotics and rehabilitation care for people with disabilities worldwide.

The global awareness raising campaign #ISPOWER aims to provide a central platform around which all stakeholders e.g. prosthetics and orthotics professionals, universities, patient organizations, disabled persons organizations, NGOs, etc. can work to achieve increased participation of people with disabilities in society thanks to enhanced access to P&O and Assistive Health Technology services.

Today, in line with the 2016 theme “Inclusion matters: access and empowerment of people of all abilities” a number of awareness raising activities will take place around the world led by ISPO Member Societies, especially in 5 pilot countries – Brazil, France, Pakistan, Rwanda and South Africa, ranging from info sessions at schools and universities, distribution of leaflets and give-aways at key events, to #ISPOWER booth at conferences, speeches at the International Day celebrations, radio talks and of course strong presence on social media.

Relying on a strong network of local member organisations, #ISPOWER is thought to stimulate local awareness raising activities by providing members with advocacy and awareness materials, key messages, templates, guidance, etc.

“There is clearly an unmet need for P&O and Assistive Health Technology services provision<sup>1</sup> and estimates show that the current gap in access to

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<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that more than 1 billion people need Assistive Products now and that two billion people will need Assistive Products in 2050. Further, only 5-10% of the population in need of Assistive Products have access to them (Source: World Health Organization)



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prostheses, orthoses and rehabilitation devices will be magnified in the near future by the immense projected population growth, ageing and the global increase in chronic diseases and all injuries resulting from emergency contexts including natural disasters”, says Rajiv Hanspal, ISPO International President.

“Working together under #ISPOWER in the framework of the World Health Organization’s [Global Assistive Health Technology initiative \(GATE\)](#)<sup>2</sup>, will increase the impact of our organizations’ advocacy activities around the world” he adds.

“Countries have to embrace the evolution of populations’ demographics, their health condition and socio-economic requirements and abide by international policy requirements<sup>3</sup>. Assistive Health Technology will be an essential game player for the next 50 years and we work hand in hand with the World Health Organization to make access to high-quality affordable Assistive Products a reality”, he concludes.

**For more information on #ISPOWER visit:**

- [ispoint.org/ispower](http://ispoint.org/ispower)
- [#ISPOWER on Facebook](#)
- #ISPOWER on Twitter: @ISPOWER\_ #ISPOWER

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<sup>2</sup> The World Health Organization’s Global Assistive Health Technology initiative ([GATE](#)) was created to realize several articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities related to the provision of Assistive Technology; specifically article 32 d - International cooperation on Assistive Technology.

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities identified access to mobility aids, assistive devices and technologies as a human rights obligation that every Member State must fulfil as well as the importance of international cooperation to improve access (Articles 4, 20, 26 and 32 d).



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